



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Federal Subsistence Board

1101 E Tudor Rd, MS 121
Anchorage Alaska 99503



SUBSISTENCE FISHING

SPECIAL ACTION

Under Authority of **50 CFR 100.10 and .19**
36 CFR 242.10 and .19

Special Action No.:	3-KS-06-14	Issued at:	Bethel, Alaska June 19, 2014
Effective Date:	June 20, 2014 8:00 p.m.		
Expiration Date:	July 14, 2014 11:59 p.m. Unless superseded by subsequent Special Action		

EXPLANATION:

KUSKOKWIM RIVER DOWNRIVER OF THE SOUTHERN TIP OF EEK ISLAND

This Special Action opens fishing with gillnets (set or drift) 6" mesh or less, 50 fathoms long, 45 meshes deep on the Kuskokwim River, DOWNRIVER of a line from Apokak Slough to the Southernmost tip Eek Island to Popokamiut. For the Kuskokwim River upriver of this line, regulations restricting gill nets to set gillnets to 4" mesh or less, 60' long, and 45 mesh deep are still in effect, as well as the prohibition targeting and retention of Chinook using other subsistence gear types (fish wheels, hook and line, etc.) on the Kuskokwim and its salmon tributaries to the refuge border at Aniak.

REGULATION

50 CFR 100.27(e)(4)(ii) is amended to read:

50 CFR 100.27 (e)(4)(ii) is modified to allow gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh size, not exceeding 50 fathoms in length or 45 meshes in depth, downriver of a line from Apokak Slough to the Southernmost tip of Eek Island to Popokamiut. UPRIVER of this line, Chinook salmon fishing is closed to all user groups and fishing with the use of gillnets is restricted to set gillnets, 4-inch or less mesh size not exceeding 60-feet in length in salmon conservation sections 1 through 3. Subsistence fishing by use of dipnet is regulated by ADF&G under 50 CFR 100.27 (e)(4)(ii). This upriver area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream of a line from Apokak Slough to the southernmost tip of Eek Island to Popokamiut, to the refuge boundary located along a north-south line intersecting the western tip of "Rabbit Island" directly east of and across Aniak Slough from the village of Aniak. Excluded waters (i.e., open to any mesh size gillnet) are non-salmon spawning tributaries: the Whitefish Lake drainage, those portions of the Kinak, Kialik, Tagayarak,

Johnson, and Gweek rivers, as well as those portions of Discovery, Birch, and Swift creeks, more than 100 yards from the mouths of these rivers. Chinook harvested in the gillnet fishery may be retained. Chinook caught using all other gear types must be released immediately.

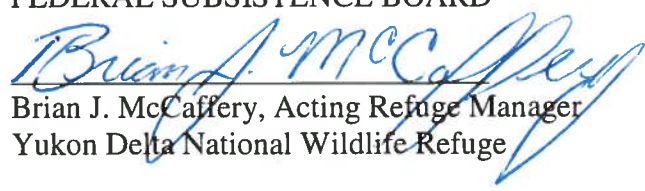
JUSTIFICATION

The 2014 State of Alaska Chinook salmon forecast is for a return of approximately 94,000 fish (range of 71,000-117,000). Given consecutive years of low Chinook salmon escapements, and the inability to achieve escapement goals, conservation regulations have been in place since May 20. The current Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) data suggest that the conservative actions taken to date have allowed substantial numbers of Chinook salmon to pass the BTF. We expect that the lower management objective for Chinook salmon will be reached if we continue conservative management actions to limit harvests of Chinook salmon while allowing for some harvest of chum and sockeye salmon. The run timing for Chinook salmon appears to have been early with BTF numbers decreasing since approximately June 14. This suggests that the majority of the Chinook salmon will move past the BTF in the next week. The current Bethel Test Fish Data indicates the ratio of chum and sockeye to Chinook continues to increase and is projected to be above 4:1 at the BTF by Friday. Chum and sockeye ratios below Bethel are generally greater 2-4 days prior to arriving at the BTF. Past information from 2010 and 2012 indicates that subsistence catches in the lower river below the Johnson River during this time period have been 25:1 and in some cases 50:1 using 6" mesh nets. These ratios and the use of 6-inches or less mesh nets during a limited 4-hour opener is considered a conservative fishing opportunity that will still protect the remaining Chinook salmon. Fishing pressure downriver of Eek Island has historically been low and is geographically outside the salmon conservation areas 1 to 3 where the chinook conservation efforts are focused.

This management action is in line with the conservation plan discussed with ADF&G, Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, public, Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, and the tribes of the Kuskokwim River in the previous 9 months.

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By delegation to:


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 Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

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